Dear Friends,

As we close the academic year, it is indeed time for platitudes and gratitude. And they are both richly deserved.

Starting this evening, UCR will host seven commencement ceremonies – one to three ceremonies per school or college, depending on their size. The ceremonies continue, with one held early morning and early evening on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

We have the largest graduating class in the history of UCR: 5,016 graduates of which more than 80% will “walk” in ceremonies. We anticipate 45,000 visitors to help celebrate the stunning achievements of our undergraduate, graduate and professional students.

Our creative staff has put together a wonderful 2.5 minute video entitled “Commencement by the Numbers,” which I commend to you: http://www.ucr.edu/ . Whether you have someone graduating this year or not, it is an inspiring time to see how many students are launching into the world. Send a greeting to a favorite grad or watch one of the seven different ceremonies online: http://commencement2012.ucr.edu/.

The work and effort of our staff and faculty in planning for this most important celebration of our academic year is quite amazing, and I speak for all in thanking these tireless members of the UCR community.

The lawn east of the Boyd Bell Tower has been re-seeded and groomed for the ceremonies, and the staging, lights, and seating in place. Our shrubs and flowers are stunning, and the roads, parking areas, signage, food service, and security will make our guests feel welcome and comfortable.

Our world-class faculty have taught, challenged, encouraged, and evaluated our students in formal and informal learning and discovery environments throughout the year, in addition to their research and creative activity efforts that rarely slow down. Academic advisors, financial aid officers, and others have stayed “student-success-centered,” despite the fact faculty and staff workloads are higher this year than the past. The success of our faculty and academic support staff is exemplary, and has earned my deep respect and gratitude.

The families and friends who have encouraged, cajoled, supported, paid, worried, laughed and cried with our students over the years are deeply thanked. It takes a “community” of support for our students to succeed at this level…they and we could not succeed without you.

To our students, hearty congratulations! You will hear many things during your commencement ceremony about the importance of your achievement and advice on what is next for you and
society writ large. Let me say simply but profoundly that you and your achievements make me very proud. Go forth leading with your head and your heart, and all else that matters will follow.

My next Friday Letter will be September 21, 2012; you can review the year through this lens…the mostly good and yet some tough moments during the year in 37 ‘chapters’...

Best wishes for pleasant and productive summer months,

Tim

Tim White, Chancellor